



June 18, 2004

Providence man is sentenced for weapon offense

Nirandone Sitthirath fled from a car and was arrested when he tried to retrieve his car at the Providence Police Department

A federal judge today sentenced **Nirandone Sitthirath**, 26, of Providence, to 46 months in prison for being a felon in possession of a firearm. Sitthirath owned a handgun that was found under a mattress in his apartment at 57 Candace Street in September, shortly after he had fled from a car.

The Office of the United States Attorney announced the sentence, which U.S. District Court Judge Mary M. Lisi imposed in U.S. District court, Providence. Judge Lisi also fined Sitthirath \$1,000.

At a hearing in March at which Sitthirath pleaded guilty, Assistant U.S. Attorney Lee H. Vilker said that, at about 11:30 PM on September 26, Providence Police Detective Gregory Sion and Patrolman William Dwyer were on patrol in a cruiser when they saw a car stop suddenly in front of 160 Hanover Street. The driver and a passenger fled from the vehicle and the officers saw that both were holding large, dark objects that appeared to be guns. The passenger discarded a handgun, which the officers retrieved. However, the two men eluded the police.

The officers determined that the car was registered to Sitthirath and traced him to 137 Candace Street, where they found a loaded, nine millimeter pistol hidden beneath a bed mattress. Sitthirath was not at home but police arrested him a few hours later when he went to the Providence Police station to retrieve his car, which had been towed after he abandoned it.

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Sitthirath admitted to police that the gun found under the mattress was his and said he had bought it for \$150 shortly after being released from prison. Sitthirath had been convicted on state charges of conspiracy and carrying a pistol without a license.

Providence Police and the **Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms** investigated the case. It was prosecuted federally under a **Project Safe Neighborhoods** initiative in which firearms cases are jointly reviewed by the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office and the U.S. Attorney's Office to determine where best to prosecute them. Project Safe Neighborhoods is a Department of Justice initiative against gun crimes.

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